DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 332 306 EA 022 882

TITLE Missourians Prepared--Success for Every Student. Recommendations for Improving Missouri's Public Schools during the 1990s.

INSTITUTION Missouri State Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jefferson City.

PUB DATE Jul 90

NOTE 22p.

PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; Curriculum Development; Educational Change; Educational Finance; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Instructional Improvement; Preschool Education; *Public Education; School Organization; State Boards of Education; State Standards; *Statewide Planning; Teacher Education

IDENTIFIERS *Missouri

ABSTRACT

Emphasizing outcome-oriented planning and management, innovation, and flexibility, this document discusses the renewal needed in Missouri public education in the 1990s and offers suggestions for educational change. Four major recommendations are presented that include creating a performance-oriented system; increasing prevention efforts; providing more time for learning; and shifting from "the Carnegie Unit" as the primary organizing factor in schools. Strategies for change, initiatives recommended by the State Board of Education, and goals for the 1990s are described for each of four areas of concern: (1) curriculum and instruction; (2) equity and opportunity; (3) teachers and training; and (4) funding and support. (CLA)

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Missourians Prepared—

Success for Every Student

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Recommendations for improving Missouri's public schools during the 1990s

July 1990
Published by the Missouri State Board of Education
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

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illustrations by Lucy Sjoblom

INTRODUCTION

This report is about the 1990s and how we can build a school system to serve Missouri's needs in the next century. Its focus is on outcomes and accountability. Our goal is simple: By the end of this decade, all Missouri students should be "top performers" who are well-prepared for work, citizenship and advanced education.

The 1980s were a time of unprecedented change for Missouri's public education system. But the 1980s are finished. A new century—a new millennium—is only 10 years away. Although we are encouraged by the school-improvement efforts of recent years, it is clear that more fundamental changes will be required for schools to meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

Many of the school-improvement measures of the past decade centered on long-standing educational policies and practices. Little has been done, however, to address the strategic and structural changes which will be required for our schools to be able to respond effectively to new social and economic demands. Therefore, during the 1990s, our school-reform strategies must focus on results—not just on existing processes and policies.

The roles and responsibilities of our schools have changed dramatically within the past decade alone. Ten years ago, for example, most children started "school" with kindergarten. This year, Missouri school districts will serve more families with children under the age of 3 than there are students enrolled in the twelfth grade across the state. Few could have predicted in 1980 that the mission of public schools would expand so quickly to include early childhood and parent education as a major responsibility.

From this single example, it is clear that past practice is no longer an adequate guide to the future. Schools must be willing to take risks and adapt to new demands. We must be prepared to discard obsolete programs and practices. By the same token, parents, taxpayers, local school boards and state lawmakers must be ready to support schools during the difficult process of fundamental change. All Missourians—not just those with school-age children—have a stake in reshaping our school system, and all Missourians share the responsibility for supporting schools during the transition. The process will not be easy or cheap.

Missourians Prepared emphasizes three key principles: outcome-oriented planning and management, innovation, and flexibility. We believe the recommendations included in this report can stimulate the kind of renewal required to achieve the outcome we desire by the end of this decade: high-quality education for virtually every Missouri citizen. Our major recommendations call for:

- **Creating a performance-oriented system** for evaluating and classifying local school districts. New state standards for this system will begin to be implemented during the 1990-91 school year. The state's accreditation process must go far beyond the

measurement of "inputs" and minimum standards; must stimulate creative and aggressive goal-setting by local schools; and must encourage outcome-oriented school improvement efforts.

- **Prevention.** We must continue to expand our investment in early childhood and parent education and other prevention-oriented programs during the preschool and primary years. The Parents as Teachers program should be available to every Missouri family that wishes to participate. Special programs for preschoolers with handicaps should be available in every community. Every school district should concentrate resources on preventing early academic failure.

- **Providing more time for learning.** The present school calendar is on the brink of overload. We must provide more time for teaching and learning. This may be achieved through summer enrichment programs, lengthening the school day, extending the school year for students and providing extended contracts for some teachers.

- **Shifting from "the Carnegie Unit"** as the primary organizing factor in schools. The education of most students today is broken up into a series of 45- to 55-minute blocks over 13 years. High school graduation requirements are based on students' completing a certain number of blocks. Teachers are licensed and granted salary increases on the basis of Carnegie Units of credit. Reliance on the Carnegie Unit contributes to the fragmentation of our present curriculum and school structure. We need to find alternatives which permit schools to focus on student outcomes and performance, not just on how much time they spend seated in classrooms.

It is clear that past practice is no longer an adequate guide to the future. Schools must be willing to take risks and adapt to new demands.

The State Board of Education believes that Missouri's public school system is better and stronger today because of the reform initiatives of the 1980s. It is important for all Missourians to realize that the Excellence in Education Act of 1985 and other initiatives (both at the state and local levels) have produced gains in many areas—rising scores on the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests since 1987, higher teacher salaries, increased academic standards, improved teacher education, a fundamental new emphasis on early childhood education and others. Because of these trends, we are optimistic that the momentum for reform can be sustained during the 1990s. However, our efforts in this decade must concentrate directly on improving student outcomes.

The State Board of Education intends to use the goals outlined in this report as benchmarks. We will review these goals and recommendations annually and "keep score." We expect the dropout rate to decline. We expect math and science achievement to improve sharply. We expect every school district to be accountable to the public and to provide an environment in which every student can learn successfully. These are the outcomes all Missourians must demand—and work for—by the end of this decade.

1 Curriculum and Instruction

By the end of this decade, Missouri should require an outcome-based instructional program designed to assure success for every student.

Among all the challenges facing our schools today, there is one underlying issue, seldom acknowledged, which is probably the greatest obstacle to fundamental change. Public schools are being pressed to adapt to rapid social and economic change and to prepare students for the 21st century. Yet the basic organization and curriculum of our schools are essentially the same as they were at the beginning of this century.

Although some government and private sector leaders are calling for "restructuring" in education, there is no consensus about what changes schools should pursue, and there is little enthusiasm or public support for radical experimentation. As a result, most school-reform efforts continue to be incremental, slow and limited in scope. Even if money were available to support ambitious reforms, the schools are not factories that can be shut down for "retooling" and modernization.

Despite these obstacles, it is clear that we must continue working to define a vision of what we want our schools to be by the year 2000. In developing that vision, we must begin changing two variables which we can control. First, traditional curriculum and instructional practices must be revised to focus on the achievement of desirable outcomes for all students. We can define and measure the goals (both academic and non-academic) which students and schools should be expected to achieve—across the board. During this decade, we must be satisfied with nothing less. Second, teachers and students must have more time and greater flexibility to achieve these goals and meet society's increasing expectations.

We recommend the following strategies:

▸ Focusing on Outcomes

Schools must accept the responsibility to clearly define their goals, to be held accountable for those goals and to make the adjustments required to assure that every student has a reasonable chance to achieve specified goals. We must focus on outcomes and accountability for individual students and teachers, as well as for schools and school districts.

▸ Increasing Time for Teaching and Learning

Teachers and schools are under pressure to give greater emphasis to various parts of the curriculum—math, science, health, geography, writing and nutrition, to name just a few recent examples. The time available for all of these "priorities," however, has not changed in 35 years. This issue must be addressed on several fronts—from making better use of the regular school day and increasing students' time-on-task, to extending the school year, offering expanded summer programs and reducing schools' reliance on the Carnegie Unit (the traditional basis for scheduling class time and awarding academic credit).

▸ Offering Alternatives and Flexibility for Students

Most schools continue to operate with a teacher-centered and textbook-driven curriculum; the students' role is essentially passive. This approach is not only dull but also ineffective for many students. Many other techniques are more effective, more engaging and more appropriate for different types of students. Schools must develop the capacity to provide an instructional environment, with a variety of techniques, to help each student develop confidence and high aspirations as well as academic competence and a lifelong desire to learn.

The State Board of Education recommends the following initiatives:

1. By 1995, the State Board of Education, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and local school districts will fully implement the "Missouri School Improvement Program" to replace the current school classification/accreditation process. The School Improvement Program will become the basis for assessing educational needs, setting goals, developing school improvement plans, monitoring progress and reporting results to the public through a profile based on district goals.

2. By the end of the decade, all school districts will adopt outcome-based education practices. This effort should include widespread adoption of mastery learning strategies; greater use of information from the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests (MMAT) and other sources to assess strengths, weaknesses and trends in student performance; and reduced dependence on textbooks as the primary basis for organizing instruction.

3. To gain flexibility in meeting the needs of individual students, schools should move away from the Carnegie Unit as the sole basis for scheduling instruction and awarding academic credit. This action will enable schools to organize

Goals for the '90s

- State standards for classifying and accrediting school districts will be revised to include outcome measures.
- All school districts will adopt outcome-based education strategies. Local educational objectives and student performance—not textbooks—will be the key determinants of the curriculum.
- School districts will reduce their reliance on the Carnegie Unit for scheduling classes, measuring student progress and awarding credit.
- The school year will be extended to 200 days. Schools will be open year-round to provide certain programs and services.
- Interaction between schools and communities and community-service options for students will be expanded.

instruction more effectively and creatively. Moreover, it will require that students' progress be measured in terms of specific outcomes, not just by grade completion at the elementary level or by the number of courses completed at the secondary level. Achieving this end also will require schools to develop and use new assessment techniques (essays, portfolios, interviews, etc.) which go beyond traditional paper-and-pencil testing methods.

4. To extend the time available for formal learning, the school year should be increased to 200 days by the end of the decade, from the current state minimum of 174 days. In addition, schools should be given support and incentives to remain open year-round—at least to the degree that they can provide flexible schedules for remedial and enrichment experiences, extracurricular activities, access to libraries and athletic facilities, and opportunities for adult patrons to use school facilities.

5. School districts should explore new ways to "eliminate the walls" of schools and promote interaction with the community. Such efforts should encourage community-service and volunteer activities which provide opportunities for students to apply and extend in-school learning.

6. Improving achievement in math and science must become a priority for all schools. At the state and local levels, greater emphasis should be placed on developing new curriculum and providing quality training and retraining for teachers in the areas of math and science. At the elementary level especially, math and science instruction must become more active, engaging and "hands-on" in order to stimulate students' interest.

7. To boost academic rigor at the high school level and to improve graduates' readiness for college or other post-secondary learning, high schools should be encouraged to increase the use of Advanced Placement courses, honors diplomas, and the International Baccalaureate program.

The Missouri School Improvement Program will become the basis for assessing school districts' educational needs, setting goals, developing school improvement plans, monitoring progress and reporting results. . .

2 Equity and Opportunity

By the end of this decade, at least 90 percent of Missouri's students will complete high school with the ability to participate fully and productively in our society.

It is clear that many citizens today are concerned about the quality of education. They are worried about the high dropout rate in public schools and the implications of this situation for the future. They are justifiably concerned about the wide disparities in educational opportunities available to students in different communities and the achievement gap between American students and those in other industrialized countries.

In the social and economic reality of the 1990s and the next century, there will be few niches for the dropout or the under-educated, unmotivated student. However, if we hope to diminish the dropout rate sharply and, at the same time, raise the general performance level of all students, extraordinary measures will be required.

In working to reduce the dropout rate, the goal must not be simply to "keep kids in school." We must strive, instead, for dramatic gains in students' skills, knowledge and aspirations. To prepare young people for life in the 21st century, schools must increase their productivity and provide new opportunities for all youth to succeed. Marginal improvements throughout this decade will do little to move us closer to the performance levels required. We must take aggressive steps now and commit the resources required to assure equity in educational outcomes for all students, not just equality in opportunities, programs and facilities.

We recommend the following strategies:

- **Prevention**

  Schools must expand their efforts during the preschool and primary years to improve children's readiness, to involve families in the educational process and to assure that every child reaches essential academic performance levels. As part of the growing emphasis on early childhood education and assuring success in the primary grades, schools must seek better coordination and articulation between preschool and the regular school curriculum. Elementary schools must be responsible for guaranteeing that no student reaches junior high or high school with a serious academic deficit.

▶ **Intervention**

Teachers must identify the needs of individual students and respond appropriately to those needs. Schools must support teachers and be prepared to intervene promptly with special assistance when students have academic or other problems which interfere with their learning and personal development.

▶ **Alternatives and Teamwork**

Schools and all of the institutions which provide services that affect students' learning and overall welfare must join forces and coordinate their efforts. We must develop and provide alternative or incentive programs for students who have serious problems and appear unlikely to succeed in a traditional educational setting. We must remove the limits on every student's achievement potential.

▶ **Recovery**

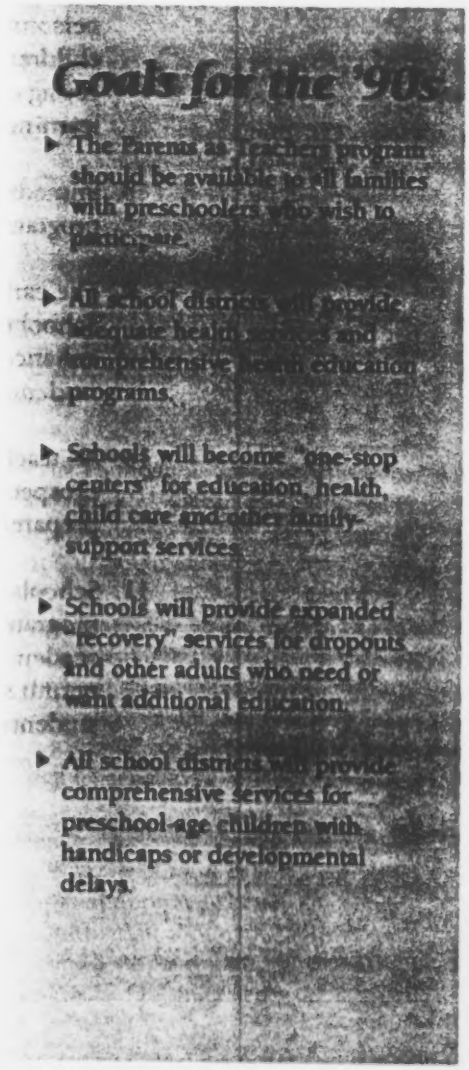
Schools must expand the options available to adults and dropouts who need or want to return to school. Learning is a lifelong activity which must be supported and facilitated by public education.

The State Board of Education recommends the following initiatives:

1. By the end of the decade, Missouri should make the Parents as Teachers program available to all families who wish to participate. By 1995, school districts must be able to serve 50 percent of all eligible families and preschoolers.

2. By the end of the decade, all school districts will provide comprehensive health education at all grade levels to promote physical and mental health and healthy lifestyles. Schools also must work closely with other community-based agencies and organizations to provide and coordinate basic health services for children.

3. Schools should become the focal point for delivering coordinated services which promote the well-being of students and their families—education, health, child care, etc. This does not mean schools should take over or replace basic responsibilities of the family. By coordinating with other agencies, however, schools can help deliver child- and family-oriented support services more effectively and conveniently, particularly for high-risk families.


Goals for the '90s
▶ The Parents as Teachers program should be available to all families with preschoolers who wish to participate.
▶ All school districts will provide
programs.
▶ Schools will become "one-stop centers" for education, health, child care and other family-support services.
▶ Schools will provide expanded "recovery" services for dropouts and other adults who need or want additional education.
▶ All school districts will provide comprehensive services for preschool-age children with handicaps or developmental delays.

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4. School districts and area vocational-technical schools should provide flexible instructional programs (both academic and vocational) and related support services to encourage dropouts to return to school. Schools also should develop programs and policies which encourage and enable all adults in the community to take advantage of available educational opportunities.

5. Comprehensive programs for preschool-age children with handicaps or developmental delays will be fully implemented in local school districts.

6. To assure that all children begin school ready to learn, school districts should concentrate on coordinating various services for families and young children—Parents as Teachers, Head Start, special education and other programs.

7. In the primary grades, students should have access to smaller classes—no more than 15 students per adult. Teachers, counselors, aides and other support personnel must have demonstrated expertise in teaching and motivating young children. Elementary principals will understand the differing learning styles of young children and be aware of developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning environments for young children.

8. Immediate action is needed to encourage school districts to establish alternative programs and classes for all youth who are in danger of failing or leaving school.

9. The early adolescent years (10 to 14) are a critical transition point for students. School districts should restructure junior high/middle school programs to enhance the intellectual, social and personal development of middle-level students.

10. All teacher education institutions and programs will provide instruction so that prospective teachers understand the characteristics of at-risk youth and are prepared to identify and work with such students, at all ages.

11. Schools should work with business and community leaders to develop creative programs and policies which encourage students to stay in school; reward high academic performance; discourage students from working excessive hours; permit students to work with mentors and explore career options; and enable students to perform meaningful community service.

By the end of the decade, Missouri should make the Parents as Teachers program available to all families with preschoolers who wish to participate.

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3 Teachers and Teaching

By the end of this decade, all Missouri school districts will be able to retain, recruit and reward highly skilled classroom teachers who are committed to success for every student.

Since 1985, Missouri has made significant changes in state policies affecting teachers and the teaching profession. A statewide minimum salary has been established, raising the entry-level salary in 1989-90 to $18,000 for all Missouri teachers. Through the career ladder program, salary incentives of up to $5,000 per year are now available for veteran teachers. The outmoded system of issuing lifetime teaching certificates has been eliminated. A rigorous evaluation process for all teacher-education programs, based on state standards, has been implemented. Local school districts are now required to provide mentors for beginning teachers, as well as formal professional development programs for all faculty members. The Missouri Teacher Education Scholarship Program is attracting talented young people into the teaching profession. A new entry-level testing program has been adopted for prospective teachers, and pre-certification testing requirements soon will be in force.

While these recent efforts reflect our belief that quality teachers are the critical ingredient of quality education, we must do more to enhance the professional status of teachers and make the profession more attractive to highly motivated individuals. The competition for talented newcomers is likely to become intense in all professions during this decade, and those who might become teachers will have many attractive career options. In such an environment, we must assure that Missouri schools are able to retain, recruit and properly reward sufficient numbers of well-trained, dedicated professionals who are committed to success for all students.

During this decade Missouri's public schools will need to hire an estimated 25,000 new teachers—to replace about half of the state's current teaching force. The teachers of the 1990s will be expected to implement new instructional practices and new technologies. They will face increasing demands for accountability. They will be expected to work expanded schedules and to facilitate meaningful parental involvement. They will be expected to help virtually all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve higher-than-ever levels of performance. Therefore, we must continue, through all programs and policies, to return the professional teacher to a position of high public esteem—a position which young people will aspire to attain.

We recommend the following strategies

▸ Improving Recruitment

Salaries for teachers must continue to increase in order to attract outstanding candidates into the profession. Entry-level salaries must keep pace with other professions, and upper-level salaries must be progressive enough to reward those who commit their professional lives to teaching. The financial rewards offered to career teachers must be commensurate with the expectations placed upon them.

The State Board of Education is especially concerned about recruiting minority teachers. It is important that our teaching corps reflect society's cultural and racial diversity. Today, however, the number of minority students in higher education is declining, and too few minority candidates are entering the teaching field.

▸ Strengthening Teacher Education

The education of teachers must be brought into closer alignment with contemporary demands and conditions in our schools. This means prospective teachers must be firmly committed to the belief that all students can be successful learners and will be prepared to meet the diverse needs of students in a multicultural society. Teachers must learn to apply new technology. All of tomorrow's teachers must have a solid liberal arts background and thorough preparation in their content or specialty areas. At the same time, their professional education must become more clinical and less theoretical in focus. Improving the working relationship between local schools and professional teacher-preparation institutions must become a high priority.

▸ Revising Certification Policies

Missouri currently offers nearly 70 separate teaching certificates. This level of specialization contributes to the fragmentation of the curriculum. The number of separate certificates should be reduced. At the same time, alternate routes to certification for experienced professionals from other fields should be reviewed and expanded. State requirements for advanced certification should be based on the improvement of teaching skills and classroom performance, not just on longevity and additional course credits.

Goals for the '90s

- State teacher certification policies will be evaluated and strengthened. If possible, the number of separate certificates will be reduced.
- Graduate programs for teachers and school administrators will be evaluated and upgraded.
- Recruiting minority teachers will be a priority for schools and colleges.
- Year-round employment will be used to increase teachers' involvement in curriculum- and staff-development activities.
- The state's minimum salary for teachers will be adjusted annually. Upper-level salaries will be increased to eliminate "compression" in school districts' salary schedules.

The State Board of Education recommends the following initiatives:

1. Teacher certification standards and procedures will be strengthened by evaluating current requirements for all certificates and revising certification policies to meet the

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changing needs of schools and teachers. In developing new certification policies, competency-based standards in subject matter and professional areas will be emphasized. Reciprocal certification agreements with neighboring states, designed to provide greater flexibility for teachers and school districts, also will be instituted and evaluated.

2. Representatives of elementary, secondary and higher education will continuously review graduate courses and programs offered for practicing teachers and school administrators. Such evaluation is required to assure that prospective administrators are adequately prepared for the mandatory Assessment Center program and that graduate courses for teachers are relevant, clinically oriented, prescribed to meet the needs of each teacher and updated regularly to reflect changing needs of schools.

3. The current Missouri Teacher Education Scholarship program needs to be expanded, and other programs need to be developed, in order to provide greater incentives for minority teacher candidates. In addition, colleges and universities should work closely with local schools to encourage and assist larger numbers of minority students to pursue higher education. Counseling, financial assistance and other support must be provided so that more minority students will seek and can be successful in higher education. Recruitment efforts aimed at minority students should begin as early as elementary school so they will be prepared to pursue higher education.

4. To provide adequate time for addressing students' needs, for school-improvement activities and for stimulating growth and renewal of staff, schools should encourage extended and year-round employment for some faculty members.

5. The minimum salary for Missouri teachers should be increased annually to assure regular growth in entry-level teachers' salaries, based on the average percentage increase in teachers' salaries statewide. Salaries for veteran teachers also must increase in order to reduce "compression" in school districts' salary schedules.

6. Teachers should be able to achieve satisfactory professional and monetary advancement without having to leave the classroom and become administrators. They should receive recognition and career advancement for contributions such as serving as "lead teachers," providing leadership in their schools or districts, and for superior performance in promoting student achievement.

7. Higher education and local school district personnel should identify and promote effective programs which foster meaningful collaboration among colleges and universities and local schools and which broaden schools' decision-making processes to include teachers and parents.

8. Schools, colleges and state education officials should actively promote the concept of teachers as "coaches" who are expected to become well-acquainted with and responsible for certain numbers of students.

The education of teachers must be brought into closer alignment with contemporary demands and conditions in our schools. Their professional education must become more clinical and less theoretical. . .

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4 Funding and Support

By the end of the decade, Missouri must adequately finance quality, basic education programs in all school districts through an equitable combination of state and local funds, and assure full funding for all state-mandated programs.

Education is the biggest, most important business in our state. During 1989-90, our public schools spent more than $3.5 billion from all sources to provide schooling for more than 800,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12. In the past decade, the mission of Missouri public schools has expanded beyond the "traditional" school-age population to include growing numbers of young children and adults. Nearly one-fourth of our population is directly involved in or affected by the public school system on a daily basis. The state constitution recognizes the central importance of education by stipulating that funding for public schools is the state's top priority, after payment of the public debt.

Recent efforts to increase funding for public education have been met with demands for specific explanations of what taxpayers are receiving for their investment in education. The demand for a correlation between spending and results permeates every current debate over funding for public education. To counter the perception that education is a "money pit" and cannot produce tangible evidence of improvement, we must develop specific initiatives in the years ahead to link funding with realistic outcomes which can be readily measured.

Despite the significant financial commitment to education by the state and local school districts, it is apparent that current funding for public education in Missouri is simply inadequate. In too many schools, for example, funding for important support services—counseling, nursing, libraries—is severely limited. The majority of schools lack the resources to take meaningful steps to upgrade math and science education, such as improving laboratories and equipment and attracting and retaining qualified teachers. Although teachers' salaries are improving somewhat, we are not able to attract enough of the brightest young people into the teaching profession. There is not enough money in most school districts to support quality staff-development programs or innovative instructional activities. In most communities, specialized programs for at-risk youth and potential dropouts are grossly inadequate.

Many school districts have become increasingly dependent on state financial aid in recent years. At the same time, rising operating costs (everything from transportation and utilities to asbestos-abatement and insurance) have reduced local school districts' flexibility in trying to focus resources on instructional programs and services.

It is time for Missouri citizens and policymakers to face the facts: Statewide tax reform and increased state revenue are essential. It is clear, given the state's current revenue and tax structure, that Missouri cannot adequately support its schools during this decade, with the escalating demands being placed on the educational system.

Currently, education is primarily funded, at the state level, through income and sales taxes and, locally, through school districts' property taxes. The relative contributions from these and other revenue sources need to be restructured in order to guarantee sufficient support for general education and to maintain appropriate local control and influence over educational policy.

To meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond, we must be prepared to specifically define our educational needs and goals and be prepared to pay the price for reaching those goals. Achieving the goals outlined in this report, so that Missouri will have a better-educated populace, will require a substantially increased investment in our schools. During the decade ahead, our actions on the important issues of taxation, spending and priorities must match our rhetoric and expectations about quality education.

The State Board of Education recommends the following initiatives:

1. The requirement that school districts obtain a two-thirds majority approval from patrons for school tax levies above $3.75 must be changed. This requirement is archaic and represents a major obstacle to school improvement in many communities. A four-sevenths majority requirement for school tax levies in excess of $3.75 should be enacted.

2. Annual state appropriations for support of basic educational programs and services (as provided through the minimum guarantee portion of the Foundation Program) must be sufficient, in combination with appropriate financial efforts at the local level, to meet needs identified through the State Board of Education's "quality schools" model. Additional state funds must be allocated to fully fund the state's present mandates, including early childhood education and special education, and to support such initiatives as extending the school year and providing specialized services for at-risk youth.

3. The minimum guarantee formula, which provides the major portion of state Foundation Program aid to local school districts, must be revised as soon as possible. The formula must be updated and revised in order to assure an equitable

Goals for the '90s

- A four-sevenths majority requirement for school tax levies in excess of $3.75 should be enacted.
- The state will provide sufficient funding to support current mandates and to implement new programs such as extending the school year and providing special services for at-risk youth.
- The Foundation Formula will be revised and adequately funded to assure equity in state-level support for all public schools.
- The state's tax structure will be reformed to reduce reliance on local property taxes for the support of education and to provide additional state revenue for all public services.
- State education officials will refine the current data-collection system to provide better information about educational trends, student performance and schools' funding needs.

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mechanism for allocating funds to all school districts and to maintain an effective balance between state and local funding.

4. New state and local funding sources for elementary and secondary education must be secured in order to reduce the reliance on property taxes. Such sources should assure natural economic growth in education funding and also provide greater balance between taxpayers' burden and relative ability to pay.

5. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will refine its data-collection and reporting system to provide more useful information about educational trends, student performance and the impact and cost-effectiveness of various school-reform initiatives. The system for collecting and analyzing education data should provide state officials and policymakers with objective data and indicators about schools' funding needs and priorities.

6. State education officials should be granted authority and flexibility to use current sources of funding to provide start-up grants and other support for innovative educational strategies in local school districts.

7. Categorical state funding should be provided to support high-quality inservice training programs, to increase teachers' participation in such programs and to foster greater cooperation among colleges of education and local schools.

8. State and local school officials should work together to test instructional uses of new technology; to provide information about successful applications of technology; and to explore more cost-effective delivery systems for traditional educational activities.

9. In order to deal more effectively with desegregation in the Kansas City and St. Louis school systems, the state should establish a formal process for budgeting, funding and evaluating programs and services related to desegregation.

10. A state-level capital improvements fund should be established to provide interest-free loans to school districts for construction and renovation projects. The fund could be supported with state monies now being allocated for capital improvements in the Kansas City and St. Louis school systems, as the need for desegregation-related capital funds diminishes in the future.